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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4752

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 000701

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM UNSC ZI

SUBJECT: UN OFFICIAL SUGGESTS U.S. ENGAGE ANGOLA,
MOZAMBIQUE ON ZIMBABWE

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Kirk McBride, for reasons 1.4
b/d.

¶1. (C) Joao Honwana, Director of the Africa Division in the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) told poloffs on August 4 that Zimbabwe talks had restarted on August 3 but lamented that resident DPA representative Vladimir Zhagora was not being allowed to interact closely with the meetings' South African facilitators. According to Honwana, A/SYG Haile Menkerios will travel to the region on August 5 and will push the South Africans for better UN access to the talks while encouraging as much progress in the talks as possible in the space of a 7-10 day visit.

¶2. (C) Honwana cited two main obstacles to progress in the negotiations: "face and real power." Beyond providing a face-saving way for Mugabe to share power, he believes mediators need to recognize that ZANU-PF would insist on retaining significant power. In part because of the sensitivity of these power-sharing negotiations, Honwana said that the South Africans had been misguided to focus immediately on which positions Mugabe and Tsvangirai would have in a unity government. In his view it would have been far more effective to focus first on humanitarian access or economic issues in order to show progress and build trust before moving on to the most sensitive political issues.

Message to Maputo

¶3. (C) Honwana, a Mozambican, qualified as personal a suggestion that the U.S. consider working through Mozambique and Angola to influence Mugabe's inner circle. He referred to Mozambique's historical support in helping Mugabe take control of ZANU in the 1970s and to Angola's current political and financial support of the Zimbabwean regime. Honwana specifically mentioned Angolan Gen. Joao de Matos as having close ties to the Zimbabwean military leadership. Someone happily retired and "rich" like de Matos could help ease a political transition by convincing Zimbabwean generals that there is life after the regime, he said. Honwana thought Mozambican and Angolan eminences grises were largely sitting on the sidelines during the negotiations but would have the inclination and access to carry a facilitative message to Mugabe's inner circle if given a push by the U.S.

Wolff